



AMETHYST

PRINCESS GEMWORLD

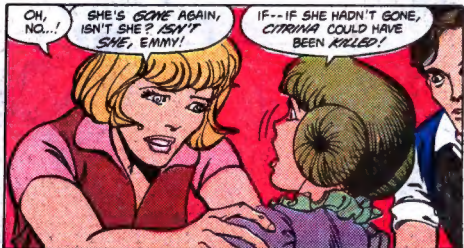
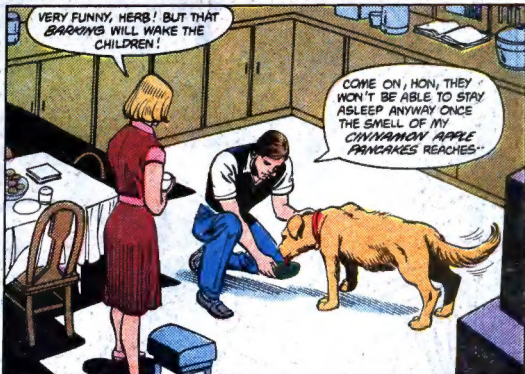
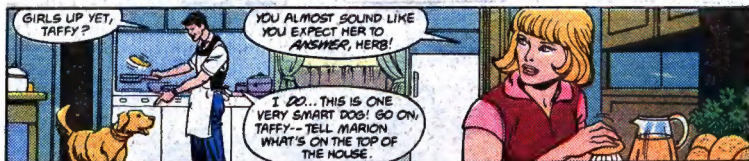
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GHOST STORY!



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SUDDENLY THERE IS MAGIC--AND A CHILD'S
DREAMS BECOME REALITY FOR ON A WORLD OF
FANTASY AND WONDER LEADS ANOTHER LIFE--
THE LIFE OF...

AMETHYST

PRINCESS
OF GEMWORLD

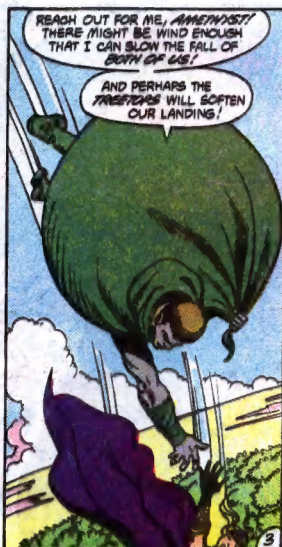
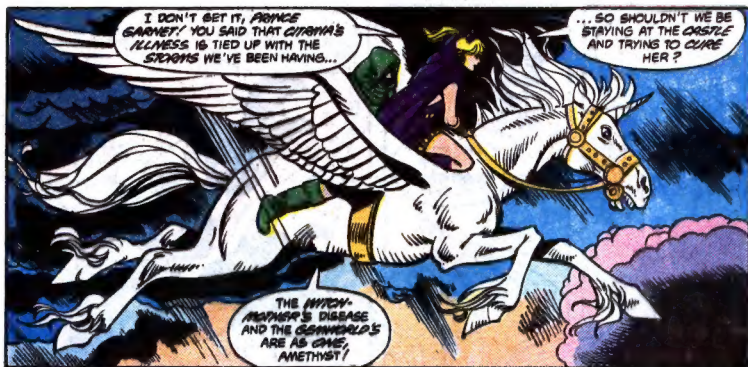
SHADOWS of the PAST

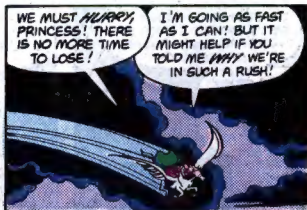
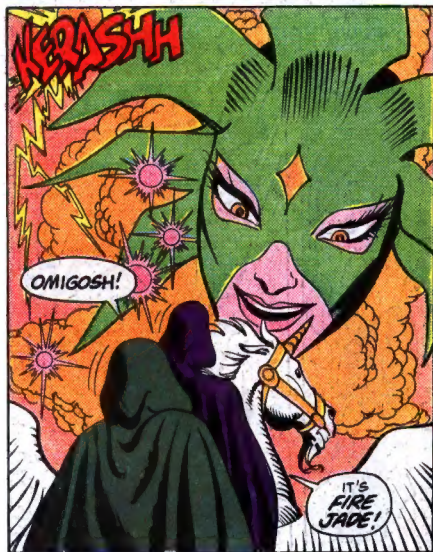
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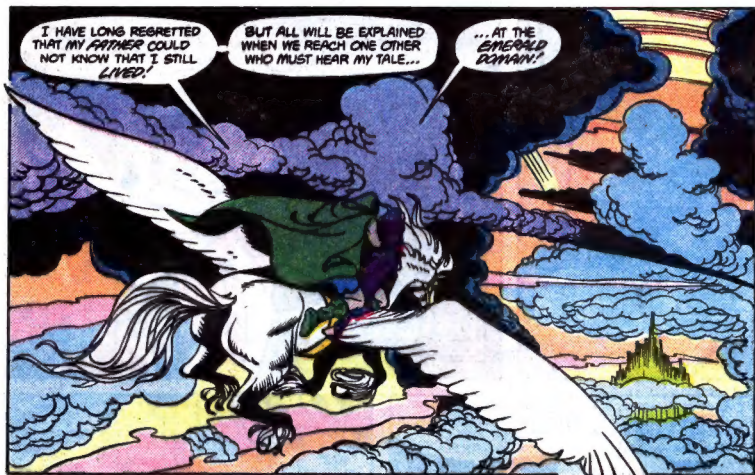
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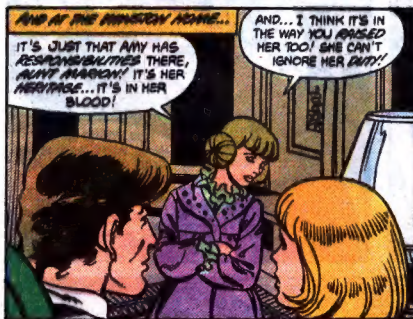




I HAVE LONG REGRETTED THAT MY FATHER COULD NOT KNOW THAT I STILL LIVED!

BUT ALL WILL BE EXPLAINED WHEN WE REACH ONE OTHER WHO MUST HEAR MY TALE...

...AT THE EMERALD DOMAIN!



AND AT THE MISTERY HOME...

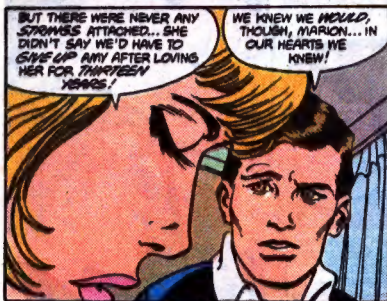
IT'S JUST THAT ANY HAS RESPONSIBILITIES THERE, AUNT MARION! IT'S HER HERITAGE... IT'S IN HER BLOOD!

AND... I THINK IT'S IN THE WAY YOU RAISED HER TOO! SHE CAN'T IGNORE HER DUTY!



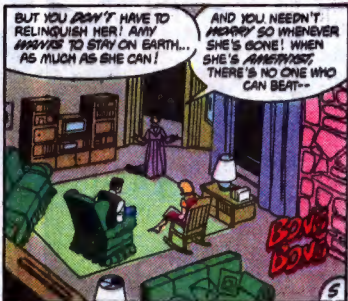
THAT MUST BE WHY CITRINA LEFT HER IN YOUR SAFECRACKING... SHE KNEW THAT AMETHYST WAS BORN TO BE A HERO--

--AND THAT YOU TWO WOULD GUIDE HER TO GROW UP AS ONE!



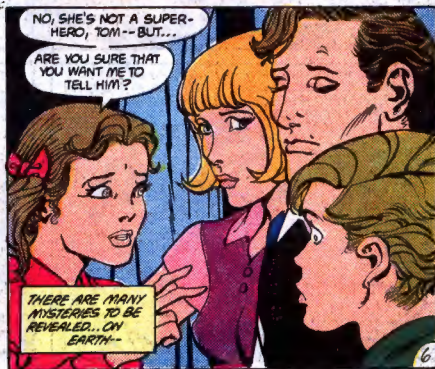
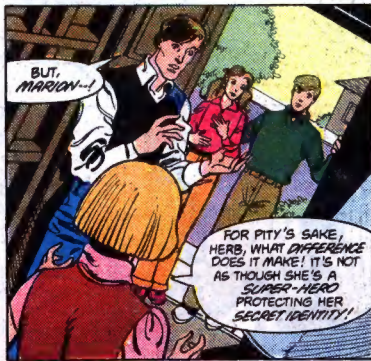
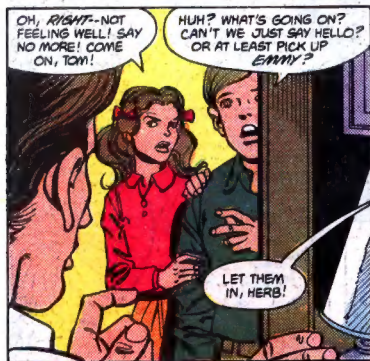
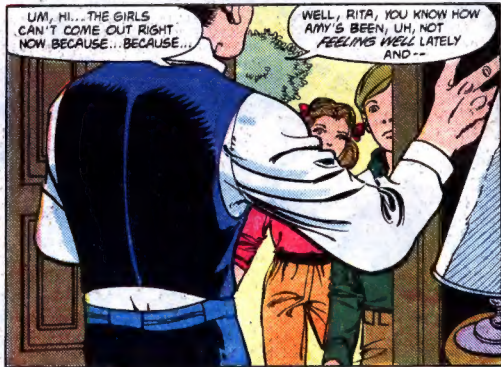
BUT THERE WERE NEVER ANY STORMS ATTACHED... SHE DIDN'T SAY WE'D HAVE TO GIVE UP ANY AFTER LOVING HER FOR THIRTEEN YEARS!

WE KNEW WE ~~HAD~~, THOUGH, MARION... IN OUR HEARTS WE KNEW!



BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO RELINQUISH HER! ANY MISTERY TO STAY ON EARTH... AS MUCH AS SHE CAN!

AND YOU NEEDN'T MARRY SO WHENEVER SHE'S GONE! WHEN SHE'S AMETHYST, THERE'S NO ONE WHO CAN BEAT--



--AND ON THE GEMWORLD!

BUT SOMETIMES REVELATIONS
PRESENT GREATER PUZZLES STILL...

MY PRINCE, I DO NOT
UNDERSTAND IT! THE STORMS
RAGE ON WITHOUT SURGESE,
AND WITH NO KNOWN CAUSE!

I FEAR THE SOURCE
IS ONLY TOO WELL KNOWN
TO ME, MY LADY! I
CANNOT SHAKE OFF THE
BELIEF THAT WE'RE
SEEING NOW THE WRATH--

--OF FIRE
JADE!

BUT YOU TOLD ME
SHE WAS DEAD...
THAT IT WAS HER
DEATH THAT FREED
YOU FROM HER
CONTROL!

SO IT SEEMED
TO ME THEN,
TURQUOISE!

AND YET THE TRACES OF THE
TIME MY MIND WAS BOUND TO
HERS CRY OUT THAT THIS CAN
ONLY BE HER HANDWORK!
I KNOW--

HOLD TIGHTLY,
TORRE!

WHAT--?

THE VERY BEDROCK
OF MY LAND IS
UNDER SIEGE!

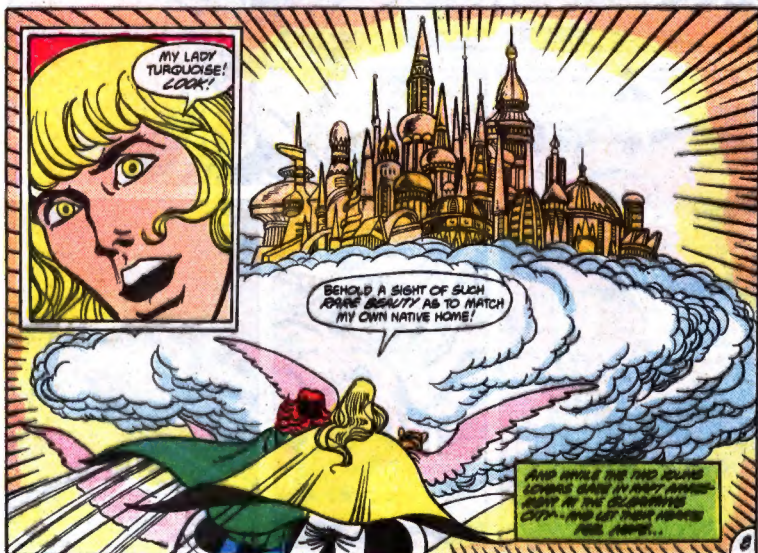
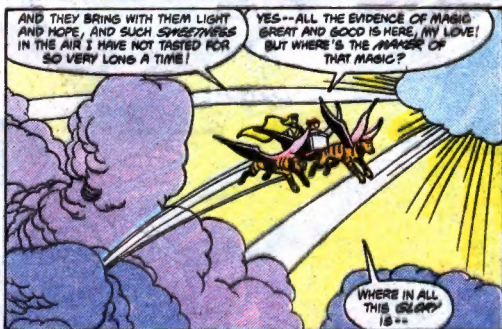
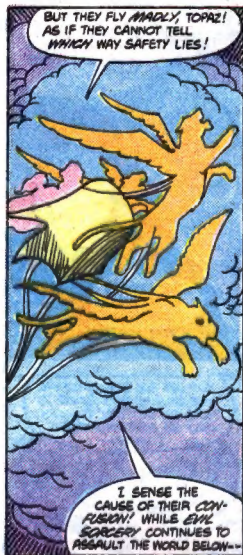
OR IS
BESIEGING
US, MY LADY!

AD, YOU BEASTS!
TURN BACK! TAKE
US DOWN!

THEY CANNOT OBEY
YOU, TURQUOISE! THEY'RE
DRIVEN NOW BY PRIMAL
FEAR!

THEY SEEK
ESCAPE FROM THE
DARK MAGIC
DOWN BELOW--

--AND WILL FLY AS
FAR AWAY AS THEIR
GREAT WINGS WILL
TAKE THEM!



...THERE ARE BUT OMENS OF ILL FORTUNE IN
THE WORLD BENEATH THE RAINCLOUDS:

THE SOUND OF ROLLING THUNDER, AND
VOICES EDGED IN DESPAIR...

THE
EMERALD
DOMAIN...

HERE IT WAS THAT ALL OF IT BEGAN
SO MANY YEARS AGO...

AND HERE IS WHERE THE MENACE WILL ASSERT ITSELF ANEW!

I SUSPECT SHE WAS UNWILLING
-- WHILE A TRACE OF HER
HUMANITY REMAINED -- TO
MAKE THIS PLACE THE FOCUS
OF HER ATTACK!

BUT NOTHING
WILL RESTRAIN
HER NOW!

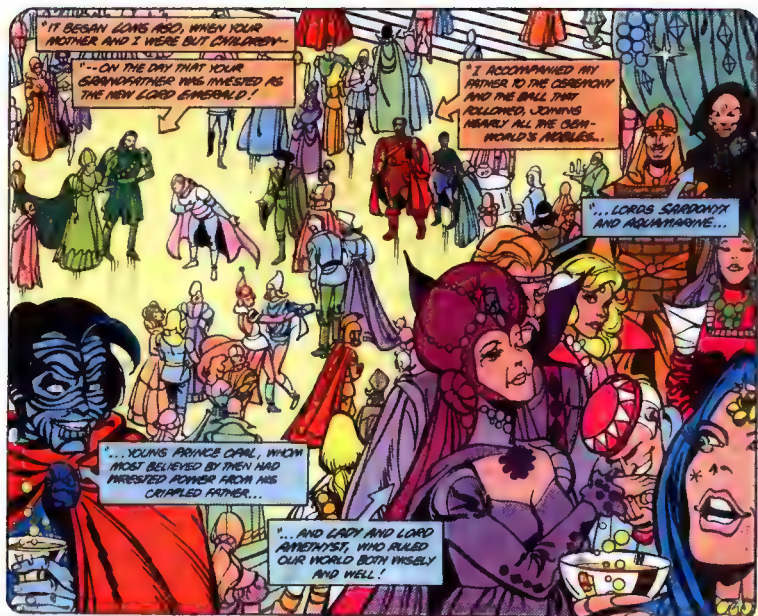
"HER" WHO,
PRINCE GARNET?
WHAT ARE YOU
TALKING ABOUT?

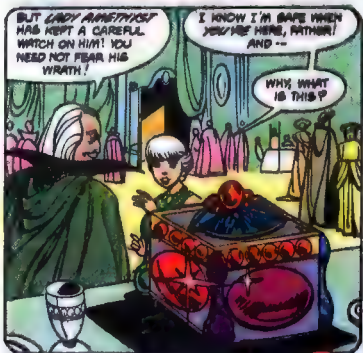
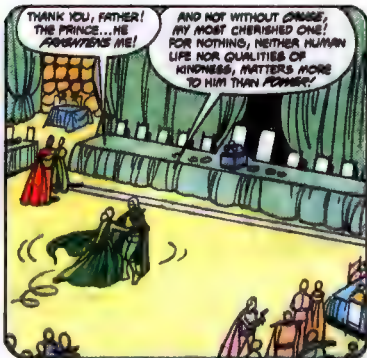
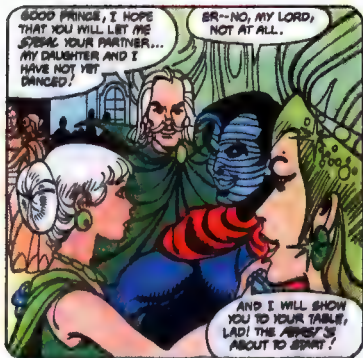
TO MAKE YOU
UNDERSTAND, I MUST
GO DECADES BACK --
TO A TIME WHEN I
WAS YOUNGER...

...A TIME WHEN
THIS WORLD
SEEMED YOUNGER
TOO -- AND MORE
INNOCENT!

AS INNOCENT PERHAPS AS THE LOVE
THAT I FELT FOR YOUR MOTHER,
PRINCESS EMERALD!

"OR WAS IT ALL JUST AN ILLUSION?"





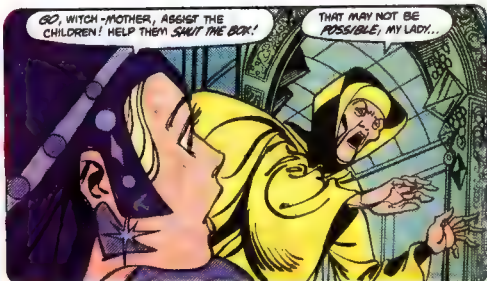




"... AND MEANT TO PUT AN END TO IT MYSELF!"

ALL RIGHT, THEN, GHOSTS! YOU MAY HAVE PETRIFIED THE PRINCESS, BUT I --

I CANNOT BUDGE IT! THE LID OF THE BOX WILL NOT CLOSE!



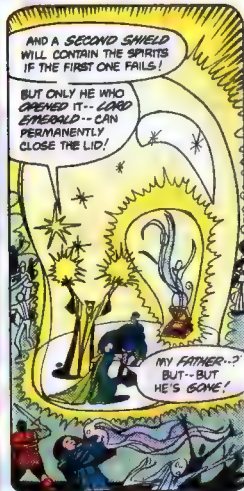
GO, WITCH-MOTHER, ABSEGE THE CHILDREN! HELP THEM SHUT THE BOX!

THAT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE, MY LADY...



BUT I WILL USE WHAT SORCERY I HAVE TO PUT A SEAL ACROSS ITS MAW!

YES-- I'VE STANCHD THE FLOW AT LEAST... IF ONLY TEMPORARILY!



AND A SECOND SHIELD WILL CONTAIN THE SPIRITS IF THE FIRST ONE FAILS!

BUT ONLY HE WHO OPENED IT-- LORD EMERALD-- CAN PERMANENTLY CLOSE THE LID!

MY FATHER...? BUT-- BUT HE'S GONE!



HE IS IN THE NAMELESS REALM WHENCE CAME THESE WARRIORS... AND SOMEHOW HE MUST BE RETRIEVED!

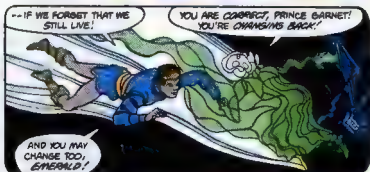
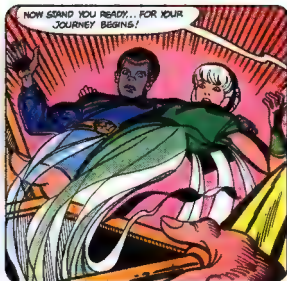
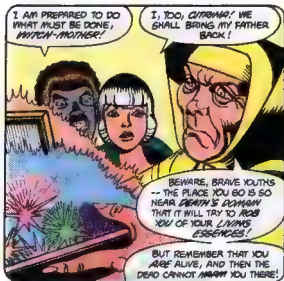
YOUR POWERS ARE VAST, CITRINA! SEND THE CHILDREN IN TO RESCUE THE LORD!

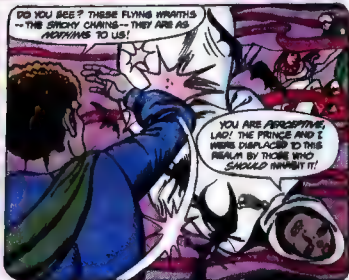
WHAT?!

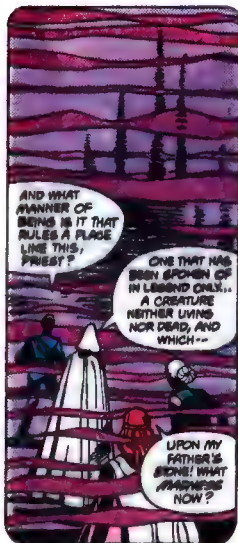


YOU KNOW WHY AQUAMARINE SUGGESTS THIS TACTIC, AMETHYST?

I DO, LORD GARNET, BUT I CAN THINK OF NONE BETTER! IT MAY BE THE ONLY WAY!







AND WHAT MANNER OF BEING IS IT THAT RULES A PLACE LIKE THIS, PRIEST?

ONE THAT HAS BEEN SPOKEN OF IN LEGEND ONLY... A CREATURE NEITHER LIVING NOR DEAD, AND WHICH--

UPON MY FATHER'S BONE! WHAT DARKNESS NOW?



I WOULD JEWELRY I SAW THAT CASTLE... SQUAWK!

YES--! THERE IT IS AGAIN! THE ENTIRE STRUCTURE SEEMS TO SQUAWK! BUT WHAT...



IN THE NAME OF MY ANCESTORS!

DO NOT BE SO QUICK TO CALL ON THEM, MY PRINCE--FOR YOUR DEPARTED FOREBARS MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN YOU KNOW!



RAAG!

AND IT SEEMS, GARDEN! THAT THEY WOULD HAVE US JOIN THEM!

GARDEN! THE CASTLE IS TRYING TO RECAPTURE THEM!



AND IT WILL SCREAM UNLESS WE--

PRIEST? THE SPIRITS HOLD FIRST! UNLIKE THE FORTUNE MOUNTAINS, THEY DO NOT RECOIL FROM MY LIVING TOUCH!

THEN TARRY HERE NO LONGER, CHILDREN...



BUT : SACK: GO TO RESCUE
LORD EMERALD!

COME WITH ME, PRINCESS?
DO NOT LOOK BACK...

AND KEEP YOUR
DISTANCE FROM THE
WRITHING SOULS
WITHIN THE WALLS!

"THUS, WITH VOICES BOLD
TO DAMPEN THE FEAR IN
OUR HEARTS, DID WE
PROCEED..."

"...WHILE AT THE EMERALD DOMINION, A NAMELESS
BATTLE RAGED AGAINST THE SPIRITS TRYING TO USURP
OUR WORLD!"

THE ENEMY'S UNPLANNING, LADY!
IF THE CHILDREN DO NOT SUCCEED...

BUT THEY MUST! AND WE, MY LOVE,
MUST STRUGGLE ON TILL THEIR
RETURN!

"DRIVEN BY MAD MUSIC ONLY THEY
COULD HEAR, THE SPIRITS TOOK THE
LIVING AS UNWILLING PARTNERS
IN A DANCE OF DEATH..."

NO, FOUL DEMON WENCH! YOU'LL
NOT SEND TO OBLIVION THE ONE
WHO WAS THIS WORLD'S FIRST
RULER!

I HAVE HER
NOW, LORD
RUBY!

O-DEAR
FRIEND,
I FEAR--

"...AND IT MUST HAVE SEEMED A
GRIM PERVERSION OF THE FESTIVE
BALL THAT HAD PRECEDED!"

--THAT
SHE HAS
YOU!

"INSIDE THE SPIRIT CASTLE, I MET
AT ONCE THE PRESENCE OF A
POWERFUL EVIL FORCE! BUT
THOUGH ITS ALL WILL WAS
GASANTIC..."



"PRINCE
GARNET!
THAT LITTLE
CREATURE!
CAN IT
BE--?"

"I AM THE
MASTER OF THIS
PLACE! AND
MASTER OF THE
GEYWORLD
SOON!"

FIRST THE NOBLES--
THOSE WHOSE MAGIC
AND POTENTIAL FOR
RESISTANCE ARE THE
GREATEST--WILL BE
DISPLACED!



THAN ALL WHO LIVE
WILL BE TRANSPORTED
HERE, AS THE SPIRITS I
HAVE SENT PREPARE THE
GEYWORLD FOR MY
ARRIVAL!

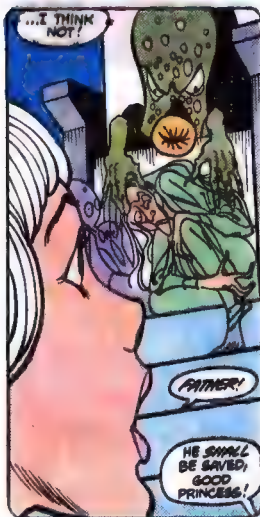
THE WORLD OF THE
LIVING WILL BE MADE
A WORLD OF THE
DEAD...

AND ALL ITS MAGIC WILL BE MINE!

NOT WHEN WE GET MY FATHER
BACK! HE'LL CLOSE THE BOX AND
YOUR ENTIRE SCHEME WILL BE
DEFEATED!



GET YOUR
FATHER BACK?
NO, GIRL...

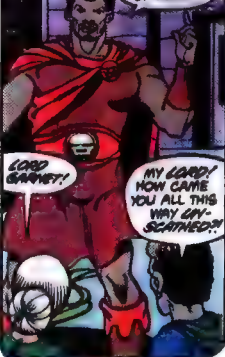


...I THINK
NOT!

FATHER!

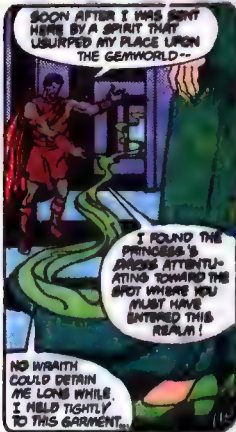
HE SHALL
BE SAVED,
GOOD
PRINCESS!

EMERALD AND I WERE FRIENDS
IN YOUTH--AND I SHALL NOT
FORSAKE HIM EVEN ON THE
THRESHOLD
OF DEATH!



LORD
GARNET!

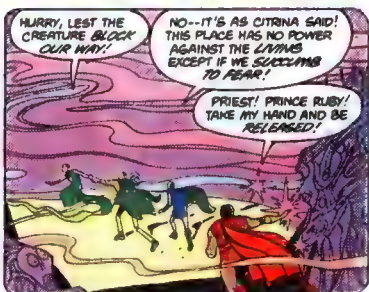
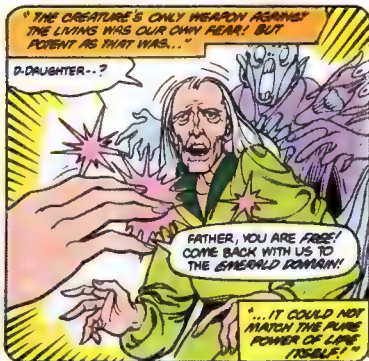
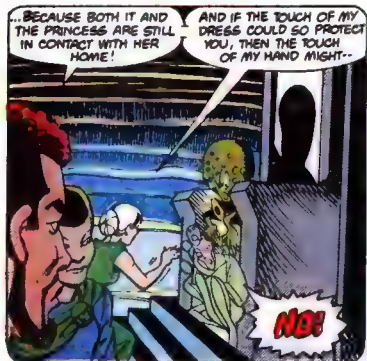
MY LORD!
HOW CAME
YOU ALL THIS
WAY UN-
SCATHED?!

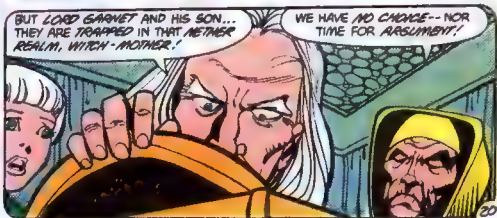
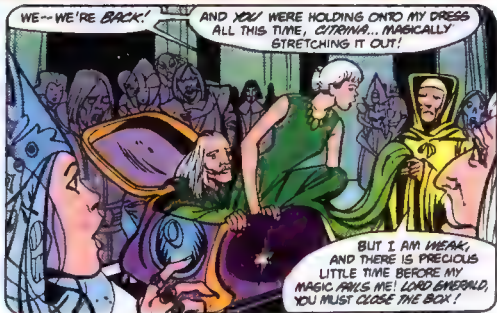
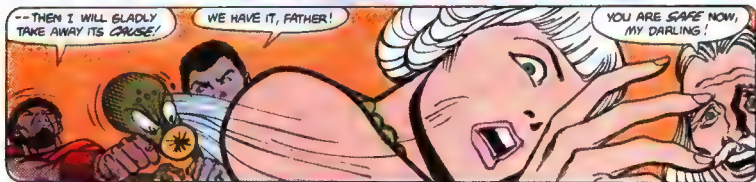


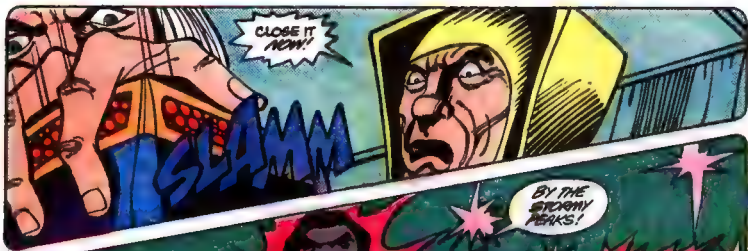
SOON AFTER I WAS SENT
HERE BY A SPIRIT THAT
USURPED MY PLACE UPON
THE GEYWORLD--

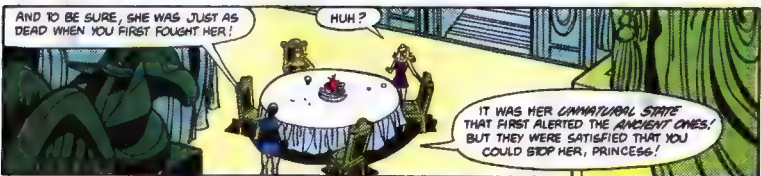
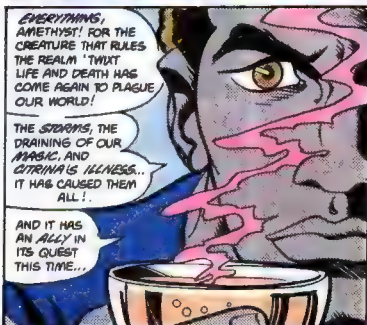
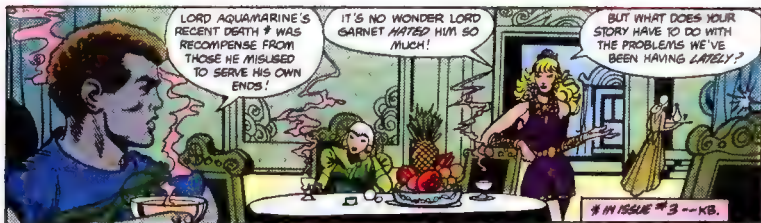
I FOUND THE
PRINCESS'S
EMERALD ATTENU-
ATING TOWARD THE
SPOT WHERE YOU
MUST HAVE
ENTERED THIS
REALM!

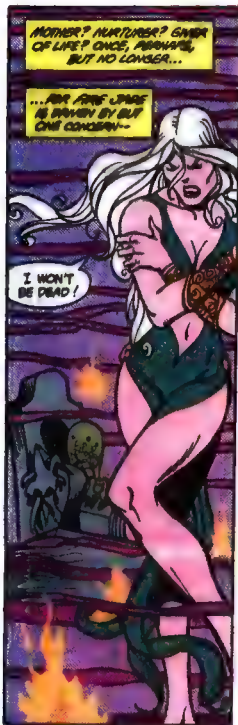
NO WRAITH
COULD DETAIN
ME LONG WHILE
I HELD TIGHTLY
TO THIS GARMENT.

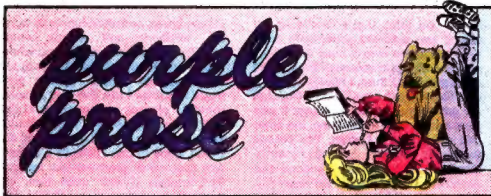












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Dear Sirs,

AMETHYST has been graced by some of the finest covers on the stands today, but APOG #4 will likely remain my favorite for some time to come. It caught perfectly the blend of ordinary and extraordinary, whimsy and pure horror, that now makes up Amy's existence.

Kurt Schaffenberger is the last person I would have pictured as an Amethyst artist, but I've always enjoyed his work. Besides, he did start out his career with a certain other fantasy child/adult hero!

At long last, an adventure where Amy Winston has center stage! Though admittedly, right now, Carnelian/Carl seems to have Amy outclassed. All Miss Winston can muster to the fore is some of the old warrior training and Emmy's weak magic. I'm afraid that would not have made much of a show against all the hi-tech Carl can import in from other establishments. But, at least with Carnelian as her new classmate and neighbor, Amy won't need a Bash Bradford/Cliff Carmichael type of character in her cast. These characters undeniably serve their use, but they've been done too many times before.

Will we ever find out:

1) What connection, if any, Rita has to Dark Opal?

2) If the mysterious Fire Jade is in reality Princess Emerald's and Emmy's "dead" sister? (We never actually saw the eldest Princess Emerald die. Fire Jade stated "but mine is power beyond the mortality... power reaching past the grave"—implying she came back from the dead, or at least its brink.) She wishes she could spare one of the nobles, and when she does pass up the opportunity to destroy one, it turns out to be Princess Emerald. The eldest Emerald would have reason to hate the monarchy after what happened to herself and her mother. Princess Emerald admits Fire Jade is even more a master of the elements than she herself is.

3) What caused Amethyst's sudden blood lust in issue #3, page 14?

4) Will Amy ever figure out how to make her magic work on Earth?

5) Whether the next anti-monarchy revolt will arise from tormented Gemworld history students, driven hard by the task of keeping straight the royal houses, parents, siblings, ancestors, descendants, every last one of them with the identical royal-pain-in-the-neck name? Whereupon the entire Gemworld nobility will probably follow Amethyst's example, go to Earth for a

while, and send U.S. census bureau employees leaping out of windows!

Gary Thompson
3701 Roosevelt
Deerborn, MI 48124

It wasn't blood lust that Amethyst suffered from in issue #3, but battle frenzy, Gary. She was physically and emotionally exhausted after suddenly arriving on the Gemworld and then immediately thrown into a full scale war. The grim and shocking reality of a terrible situation has its effects on even someone as self-controlled and strong-minded as Amethyst. And as far as Earth-related questions go, only Amethyst has magical abilities, Amy doesn't. It's not a matter of figuring it all out, the magic just doesn't work that way.

Dear Everyone,

I've been reading DC Comics for a long time now. I think TEEN TITANS' and AMETHYST are the BEST so far! I can't wait until next issue to find out what happens to Fire Jade (wonderful name) and Amethyst. I've just got one question for you. If in the Annual Prince Topaz didn't even think of Turquoise, then what are they doing kissing each other now? I also think Dark Opal is not dead and I bet he's going to try and conquer the Gemworld again.

Well, I just want to say that you're doing excellent work with AMETHYST!

Your devoted reader,
Delliah Bermudez
1111 Meadowlark
Miami Springs, FLA

All I'll say about Dark Opal is ... remember his clasp. That's it.

Dear Karen,

I just wanted to drop you a line telling you how much I enjoy your book, AMETHYST, PRINCESS OF GEMWORLD.

I started reading it with issue #4 of the series and loved it so much I went out and bought the Annual and issues #1-3.

Thus far, my favorite characters are Prince Topaz, Lady Turquoise, and of course, Amethyst. All I can say for Topaz is that I hope he gets his act together and drops Turquoise for Amethyst. Don't get me wrong, Lady Turquoise is still a favorite, but I hope she falls for someone else (Prince Moonstone, maybe?). As for Amethyst, keep up the good work!

Now on to the bad guys—namely Fire Jade. She is a great character with lots of potential and I hope you aren't through with her. And all I can say for issue #3 when Fire Jade could have killed Emerald, is that Fire Jade is somehow related to Princess Emerald and Emmy ... am I right? Well, that's it for now and thanks again for a great book!

Kevin Newman
Woodbury, CT

Welcome aboard, Kevin, and glad you're enjoying the series. The love triangle between your favorite characters should be coming to a head real soon, so be sure to stay tuned.

Dear Purple Prose,

After the maxi-series, the Annual and four issues, I finally feel confident enough to write. So far AMETHYST is surpassing the maxi-series. The writing is still exceptionally outstanding, and the art is even better than the first time around.

Now some general comments, ideas, questions:

1. Don't make Rita the new Dark Opal. Everyone has undergone character changes but that would be awful. Besides, she's too nice.

2. From which royal house did Lord Amethyst hail? I had thought maybe Ruby, and he and Lady Amethyst were married to ensure that the Gemworld would be ruled by two people who seem to have been extraordinary rulers. Maybe it's something even better that could be told in an annual or anniversary issue.

3. Lady Turquoise is an excellent character, don't make her and Amy enemies. I do think that she would be better for Topaz because he was probably looking for adventure and a reason not to marry Lady Sapphire. This would also leave Amy room for romantic development.

4. The last panel on page 19, issue 4 is priceless. It would be natural that the nobles would try to restore some semblance of order, such as marrying off their children to ensure for the future. Also, there seems to be a disproportionate number of marriageable Gemworld men to women, 3 men to 6 women, and that's counting Carnelian. Traditionally, royal families had many children, to compensate for such things as infant mortality, disease, etc. Maybe there are more royal children and

spouses that have not been shown.

5. I think Fire Jade was really Lady Emerald. The manifestation that was supposed to be Fire Jade at the ceremony of investiture appeared in younger Princess Emerald's room, which seemed to be the same room Lady Emerald was poisoned in. In issue #3, she says "Mine is power beyond mortality ... power reaching past the grave." She also says she wishes one of the nobility could be spared. Excepting the fact that she has two daughters, I think it's a viable theory. Maybe she considers the younger daughter stuck on Earth and too young to be a problem. She also did not blast Princess Emerald to smithereens in issue #3, as Princess Emerald herself saw this. In issue #2 there was a wave of white hair sticking out under her mask. Lady Emerald has white hair. Why is she doing this? is the question. At any rate it's a shame she died, whoever she was. She was a very dynamic character.

6. Are there any other lands on the Gemworld other than the ones we've seen?

7. Why does Amy have to keep her gemstone with her to use her magic, but not the other Lords and Ladies?

Best of luck for a very long and successful run.

Muzzy Qazilbash
120 Beacon St.
Hyde Park, MA 02138

I'm only going to address a few of your comments and questions, Muzzy, due to space limitations, and my sanity, so taking them in no particular order: I believe you were the only one of our letter writers who figured out the correct identity of Fire Jade. Congratulations and be sure to be here next month when we not only learn how Lady Emerald was transformed into the villainess, but what the true fate of Fire Jade will be, as well.

The Gemworld is full of many other lands, and in due time we'll be incorporating more and more of them into the story line. The kingdom in the sky that Topaz and Turquoise just discovered is one of many intriguing developments to come.

And lastly, all the Lords and Ladies don't necessarily have to wear their gemstones around their neck, as Amethyst does. As long as they have the gem with them—sewed into their clothing as part of a design, as jewelry, or even hidden—their magic powers will work just fine.

Dear Karen,

Talk about a small world. I just finished addressing and writing a letter to you as editor of the Swamp Thing comic (which is one fine comic, and those who don't buy it sure are missing something very special), and now I find myself writing another letter to you concerning AMETHYST. But I thought you were the one who was editing the LSH. WOW, you mean you edit all three? That at times must get confusing, shuffling three comic titles all at the same time.

But if you think that's confusing, try asking two different astrologers what your gemstone is and have them both give you different answers. Man, was I confused, but I think I finally figured it out. You see, one astrologer told me that my gemstone was an Amethyst (I was born on the 28th of January), the other told me it was a Garnet. The second astrologer was wrong. True, my birthstone is a Garnet but my gemstone is an Amethyst. Confusing, ain't it? Not really, for you see, although my birthstone (a Garnet) is the stone of which my life line is aligned, the Amethyst gemstone is better attuned to my specific talents and abilities, supposedly able to bring me luck in fortune and fame. WHEW! That is confusing. Oh well, that's life in general for you. Everything that should be simple turns out to be more complicated than you thought it would be. For instance? Okay, take this issue. Prince Topaz is supposed to be in love with Amethyst, right? Wrong. This issue he claims to be in love with Lady Turquoise. And what of Fire Jade? A totally evil lady bent on death and destruction, right? Wrong. Just when Fire Jade has the chance to kill Amethyst she doesn't. Why?

Don Ice Jr.
R.D. 4 Cedar Manor
Elisabethtown, PA 17022

Have to confuse you even more, Don, but we Gemworlders over here go by the birthstone, regardless of what one's personality traits might better be attuned to. So, if you ever expect to pay a visit to the Gemworld, Lord Garnet's the man you should be looking up.

Dear Ms. Berger,

I just dug out my first comic books, about 500 Harveys that haven't seen the light of day for at least a dozen years. Please confirm or deny something. Do my eyes deceive, or did Ernie Colón draw an awful lot of the Casper, Spooky, Little Dot, Little Lotta, etc. stories? Did he write them as well?

Is there, I wonder, just a little bit of Wendy, the Good Little Witch in Amethyst?

John Henry Sain
2251 Kings Highway
Medford, OR

Yes, Ernie did draw many of the Harvey characters you mentioned, John, as well as my favorite, Richie Rich. I believe he also wrote some stories, too. As for a little bit of Wendy in Amethyst? Maybe just a little.

Dear Amethyst People,

Having finally tracked down the last Amethyst that I was missing, I have just finished rereading the series in toto. Boy, was it great! And so were the Annual and the DCCP with Superman! So I just thought I'd write a fan letter to tell you what exactly I like so much: 1) a colorful, magical, beautiful realm with constant surprises and many strange beings; 2) a heroine who is female,

clever, brave, and often funny; 3) horrible, terrifying, evil villains whose motives are understandable and whose power is really threatening; 4) the connection to "earth" (please don't overdo this, as I like the idea of being princess of your very own world that only a few know about); 5) in particular, some of the full-page spreads of one realm, done in one color; 6) a supporting cast which promises real interest; 7) Carnelian (I will miss him, the entertaining jerk!); 8) consistent surprises to maintain interest; 9) connection to nature and natural forces.

So ... if you keep those things up, I promise to keep reading! Thank you!

Sheila Stone
2322 Garnett Row (yeah!)
Arcata, CA 95521

As you've no doubt noticed, Sheila, Carnelian is not really gone. He's just moved in next door to Amy as Carl, and he sure has plenty of strange tricks up his sleeve!

Dear Dan and Gary, Ric and Ernie,

It's nice to see Amethyst with her own book on a permanent basis and the people at D.C. are to be congratulated for taking their time. Developing new plotlines and digging into the wonderful cast of characters before going off half-cocked ought to give the book the integrity it deserves. There are enough characters in Gemworld that the machinations ought to go on for a long time. Political intrigue seems to be the watchword in this first issue and probably for several issues to come. Fire Jade appears to be a powerful opponent. I'm looking forward to a long run of AMETHYST and wishing you and the crew every success.

Sincerely,
Frank Denton
14654 8th Ave. S.W.
Seattle, WA 98166

NEXT MONTH:

A turning point for Amethyst, and the fates of Catrina and Fire Jade are decided! See you then—Karen



GUEST

MEANWHILE...

The year 1984 saw many anniversaries observed in the comics world. Most of these were proclaimed from splashes of color or gold bands on covers. But, at least in my neighborhood, one set of anniversaries, milestones in the world of comics, seem to have passed unnoticed.



It was the thirtieth anniversary of Dr. Frederic Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* and the formulation of the Comic Book Code.

For those who may have missed the book, *Seduction of the Innocent*, or SOTI, as it is known to fans, was the work of a psychologist, apparently a decent sort of fellow, who held two major ideals:

- a. violence is bad
 - b. enhanced communication will diminish violence
- During the great "juvenile delinquent" phase of American culture in the fifties, when people were searching for explanations of what was seen as a mass uprising by American teenagers, Dr. Wertham came to the conclusion that television and comic books, especially comic books, all comic books, were the cause of the evil. They violated both his ideals by glorifying violence and telling stories in picture form, rendering young minds incapable of comprehending or communicating complex or abstract ideas.

To read SOTI today is to read a textbook in dysphemism and muckraking. Dr. Wertham seems to have decided that comic books were evil and then gathered the facts to prove it. The book relies heavily on Finagle's Ninth Precept: "If you tell people something, nine out of ten will believe it without asking questions. And if you add that your facts are the result of a scientific survey, the percentage goes up." The fact that Dr. Wertham believed everything he wrote gives the writing more fervor. SOTI and the doctor's later works are still quoted and cited by the protectors of youth. (Dr. Wertham, in the seventies, also wrote a book on fan magazines. He approved of them, because they represented a means of communication.)



The U.S. Congress investigated comic books in 1954, among other things. (There was also an investigation of paperback book covers under way.) Hoping to avoid any further federal heat, comic book publishers decided to set up a batch of rules for internal regulation. One might assume Dr. Wertham would have been pleased, but one would be assuming incorrectly. Dr. Wertham gave his opinion of previous codes in SOTI: they were attempts by the publishers to cover up their own misdeeds. Dr. Wertham condemned not just the primarily violent titles, the

horror and crime titles, but all comic books, from BUGS BUNNY to TALES FROM THE CRYPT and back again.



No one can be found, in fact, to say a good word for the Code. Or can there? Actually, the Code did its work well, and did it twice. First, it forced comic book writers and artists to throw away the old clichés and old hackneyed plots, now forbidden under the Code, and come up with new ones. (Whether the result was more artistic or more readable can be debated. The era produced its peaks and its Death Valley, but so did the pre-Code era.) Then, after the passage of a suitable number of years, it allowed for a "rebirth" of comics, as new writers "dared the Code," throwing away the new clichés and new hackneyed plots and returning to the old ones.



Dr. Wertham has gone the way of EC Comics, and the Comic Book Code hasn't been at all well, lately. But the comic book industry continues, as do the people who would like to see it restrained by law. Different muckrakers with different codes will come along, and the comic book industry may light or it may hide behind more internal regulations, and if anyone looks back at the events of 1954 at all, it will probably be to shrug and say, "Well, that was just another phase we went through."

Which is what commemorating anniversaries is all about.

Dan Crawford
940 N. Franklin St.
Manchester, Iowa 52057



DC
ON SALE THE
CHECK
WEEK OF APRIL 11
LIST

☐ **Red Tornado 1:** A four-issue miniseries where the android gets his act together!

- ☐ **Batman 385:** Batman and Robin face dangers on the streets of Gotham!
- ☐ **The Flash 347:** The trial concludes with the final summations!
- ☐ **Superman 409:** Superman becomes "The Sleepwalker from Krypton."
- ☐ **Star Trek 16:** Kirk and company return from the Mirror Universe only to confront—the Federation!
- ☐ **Amethyst 7:** The secret of Lord Garnet is revealed!
- ☐ **Jemm, Son of Saturn 11:** The destruction of Claudius Tull!

- ☐ **Arak, Son of Thunder 46:** The Son of Thunder meets the Norse god of Thunder!
- ☐ **Omega Men 28:** Ryand'r meets the creatures of the synoptic net!
- ☐ **Legion of Super-Heroes 12:** Amidst interstellar battle, three Legionnaires quit!
- ☐ **Batman Annual 9:** The four faces of Batman presented by Barr, O'Neill, Jurgens, Giordano, Ordway, Nino, and P. Smith!

If you like it, buy it! Support the comics industry.

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